

2008 Conference USA Men's Basketball Championship



Press Conference Quotes Saturday, March 15, 2008 Memphis 77, Tulsa 51

Memphis Head Coach John Calipari

"When we shoot the ball the way we shot it today, we're really good. It doesn't matter who we play. That was probably as good as we've played. It was one of our top three games all year. Tulsa hit us on bad day. They also played four games in four days, which affected them. Also, we played 11 guys for a lot of minutes. The reason I did it is because those kids deserve to play in the championship game. I really wish I could play those kids for more minutes and then go back to our starters because I like our starters playing together. It's hard though because those guys have to come in and perform. You can't come in and miss a shot and then foul and get the game going the wrong way. Today I thought when I put those kids in they took the game to another level. That's why I left them in. If you noticed they were absolutely exhausted when we pulled them out. I was proud of Doneal (Mack), Willie (Kemp), Andre (Allen) and Jeff (Robinson). They all played well."

On Antonio Anderson being the game's MVP ...

"I was so happy. He doesn't get the respect he deserves. Well, I take that back. He does in the areas where it matters. He does from coaches and scouts who evaluate my team. He gets all that respect. For some reason he gets overlooked by some people because he just goes out and silently does his thing. He played more minutes than anybody I've ever coached, so you know what I think of him. The greatest thing was that if you watched our team, they were ecstatic for him. Because they know that's the case too. I'm proud of Joey, but Antonio should have been the Conference USA Defensive Player of the Year. That's who we presented from our team for that award, but obviously I'm happy for Joey."

On Douglas-Robertson and Anderson playing well together...

"Chris Douglas-Roberts played well too. It was funny when we recruited them because people said, 'Hey, you don't want to go to Memphis because he's got another one just like you.' We have kids now that are being told the same thing and I tell them to look at these two. They've both prospered. They've learned to play off of each other. They will be friends 40 years from now. It's unique because of the kind of people we have. They're taking us all on a ride. I mean me and my staff."

Junior guard Chris Douglas-Roberts

"Do you like the line changes five and five? Is it a good way to get you rested and get you in a groove?"

It's definitely a better way to play. You get a lot more rest and you get the other guys an opportunity to get out there and play as well. Usually we sub two or three at a time. Today coach switched it up a little bit. He just wanted everybody to get in there and be a part of this. They went out there and did a good job. That's how we practice and they're much more comfortable with each other than playing with us. It showed today how they came out there and played with each other. Both teams are really unselfish. Whichever team has it going will play. It doesn't matter whether it's the starters or the subs. They came right out and went at (Shawn) Taggart; he was really productive.

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Tulsa Head Coach Doug Wojcik

"All the credit in the world to Memphis, shooting the heck out of the basketball. Anytime you shoot it that well, especially from three... They are a legitimate contender to win it all. I think Antonio Anderson is the key for them, as far as what their goals are and where they are going on a national level. If he plays like that, they really share the ball well. I really admire the chemistry between Chris Douglas-Roberts, Derrick Rose and Antonio Anderson. At this level, when you recruit those kids, everybody has an ego, and for them to play as well as they do, one of the plays late in the game that was interesting to me was Antonio had just hit two threes in a row, and the ball got reversed to Rose, and right away he went right back to Antonio Anderson. He missed the shot, but it just shows you their unselfishness as a team. Their goals are greater than their individual accolades. My hats off to them."

After 4 games in four days, how much did fatigue play a factor in this game?

"0-14 from the field for our guards. It's not their fault, we just didn't shoot the ball well."

Talk about how satisfying it was just to get to this point.

"It was a great accomplishment. I thought the guys really had their focus and their goals set right coming down here. We had been playing very good basketball the last half of the season, no doubt about it. Jerome (Jordan) continued to develop, and his development helps everybody. So, it is very satisfying. There is no shame in this. I talked to the guys about keeping their chins up. We just played the number two ranked team at 10:30 in the morning on the fourth day of the tournament on their home court. It's a great accomplishment."

Sophomore guard Ben Uzoh

"It was tough coming out. You try to push it to the side, but as much as you try, you still feel the aches and the pains. You are just playing, and you try to play through it as much as you can."

Senior forward Calvin Walls

How did you guys feel playing your fourth game in four days?

"It's tough, not only our fourth game, but coming off two overtime games against two teams, one is the second ranked team in our conference and UTEP beat the third ranked team in our conference. It's tough. You can't use that as an excuse, but it's tough, and I just admire my teammates for that and I admire our coaching staff for that for coming back and just coming in here and fighting hard."